Fake payments by Defence Estate Officer at Chandigarh

2180. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Defence Estate Officer at Chandigarh made bogus payment, worth several lakhs of rupees for four panchayats in Punjab in 1997-1998;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) action Government have taken against officers involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A case was reported in March, 1999 about release of Rs. 38.25 Lakhs by the Defence Estate Officer (DEO), Chandigarh to various Panchayats of Bhatinda and Patiala Districts in Punjab on account of Service Charges payable to local bodies during 1997-1998, serious procedural irregularities were stated to have been committed by the then DEO Chandigarh.

Disciplinary proceedings were ordered immediately and all the officers alleged to have been involved were placed under suspension. Further, the officer approached the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) for revocation of suspension and on the orders of the CAT, the orders of suspension were revoked and the Departmental Inquiry is under progress.

Diversification of coast guard activities

2181. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the various activities presently being undertaken by the Coast Guard;

(b) whether Government have a proposal to diversify the activities of the Indian Coast Guard; and

(c) if so, the details of the diversification programme launched or proposed to be launched?